

Jalapa Mazatec

Jalapa Mazatec is a Mazatecan language, as of 1990 spoken by ca. 15,000 people, one-third of whom are monolingual, in 13 villages in the vicinity of the town of San Felipe Jalapa de Díaz in the Tuxtepec District of the Mexican state of Oaxaca. Egland (1978) found 73% intelligibility with Huautla, the prestige variety of Mazatec.^[1] Literacy in Jalapa is taught alongside Spanish in local schools.

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Grammar

Jalapa Mazatec root words are primarily monosyllabic, and the intricate inflectional system is largely subsyllabic (Silverman 1994).

Phonology

Jalapa Mazatec syllables are maximally CCGV. However, vowels distinguish several phonations, and like all Mazatec languages, Jalapa has tone.

Tone

Jalapa roots distinguish three tones, low ˩, mid ˧, and high ˦. In morphologically complex situations, combinations of these may form short (or perhaps mid-length) vowels with contour tones: ˩˧, ˧˦, ˦˩, ˩˦, ˧˩, ˦˧ have been recorded.

The simple tones are contrasted in /ʃá/ (/ʃa˦/) "work", /ʃā/ (/ʃa˧/) "puma", /ʃà/ (/ʃa˩/) "mould".

In much of the literature, these are written with the numerals 1 (low), 2 (mid), and 3 (high).

Jalapa utilizes whistled speech, where each simple or contour tone is given a whistle pulse.

Vowels

Jalapa Mazatec	
Native to	Oaxaca, Mexico
Region	San Felipe Jalapa de Díaz
Native speakers	18,000 (2000) ^[1]
Language family	<div>Oto-Manguean<ul style="list-style-type: none">Popolocan<ul style="list-style-type: none">Mazatecan<ul style="list-style-type: none">Lowland<ul style="list-style-type: none">Valley<ul style="list-style-type: none">Southern<ul style="list-style-type: none">Jalapa Mazatec</div>
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	maj
Glottolog	jala1237 (http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/jala1237) ^[2]

Jalapa Mazatec distinguishes five vowel qualities, discounting phonation: /i/, /æ/, /a/, /o/, /u/. Phonations are modal voice, breathy voice, and creaky voice; all phonations may also occur with the five nasal vowels:

Jalapa Mazatec vowels

Modal voice	i	æ	a	o	u
Breathy voice	ĩ	æ̃	ɑ̃	õ	ũ
Creaky voice	ᵢ	æ̰	ɑ̰	o̰	ṵ
Modal nasal	ĩ	æ̃	ɑ̃	õ	ũ
Breathy nasal	ĩ̃	æ̃̃	ɑ̃̃	õ̃	ũ̃
Creaky nasal	ḭ̃	æ̰̃	ɑ̰̃	õ̰	ṵ̃

Breathy vowels may have strong breathy voicing throughout their length. However, typically they are voiceless for the first 40% and then have modal voice, so that for example /mæ̃↓/ may be pronounced [mæ̃↓] or [mæ̃̃↓]. Similarly, creaky vowels tend to confine their creakiness to the first part of the vowel, often with glottal closure before modal voice: /sᵢl/ as [sᵢi] or [sᵢʔi].

Jalapa is unique among the Mazatec languages in distinguishing breathy vowels. These arose through the contraction of Proto-Mazatecan disyllables of the form CVhV, where C was voiced and the two vowels were the same. When the two syllables carried different tones, these contracted into a contour. For example, proto-Mazatec *ntʰaJhuJ "stone" became /ndʰõJ/ (through a presumed intermediate *ndʰoJhoJ); *ntʰeJheJ "thief" became /ndʰæ̃J/; and *ntuJhwiJ "your soap" became /ndᵢːJ/. Similar contractions occurred with CVʔV disyllables to produce creaky vowels, but creaky vowels already existed in the proto-language.

Jalapa also has a phonemic distinction of unclear nature that has been suggested to be "ballistic". However, it lacks the characteristics of ballistic syllables in other Otomanguean languages. The only consistent distinction Silverman *et al.* (1994) were able to measure was one of vowel length, with vowels of the alleged ballistic syllables being two-thirds the length of the vowels of the productive open class of nouns, with a slight increase in pitch. They may reflect the original short vowels of proto-Mazatec, as opposed to the vowels of morphologically complex monosyllabic nouns of modern Jalapa Mazatec. If so, Jalapa would have a three-way length distinction, as doubly long vowels are also found in morphologically complex situations. Note that this distinction is *not marked* in this article apart from this one table:

"ballistic" (short?)	trans.	"controlled" (half long?)	trans.
sū	"warm"	sū̃	"blue"
nī̃ ntū	"slippery"	nī̃ ntū̃	"needle"
tsæ̃	"guava"	tsæ̃̃	"full"
hū̃	"y'all"	hū̃̃	"six"

Consonants

Jalapa consonants distinguish (prenasalized) voiced, tenuis, and aspirated plosives, as well as voiceless, voiced, and glottalized sonorants.

		Bilabial	Alveolar	Palatalized alveolar	Velar	Labialized velar	Glottal
Plosive	aspirated		t ^h	t ^{j h}	k ^h	k ^{w h}	
	tenuis		t	t ^j	k	k ^w	ʔ
	voiced	^m b	ⁿ d	ⁿ d ^j	^ŋ g	^ŋ g ^w	
Affricate	aspirated		t ^s ^h	t ^f ^h			
	tenuis		t ^s	t ^f			
	voiced		ⁿ dʒ	^ɲ dʒ			
Fricative			s	ʃ			h
Nasal	voiceless	^ɱ	^{ɲ̥}	^{ɲ̥}	^{ŋ̥}	^{ŋ̥} ^w	
	voiced	m	ⁿ	^ɲ	^ŋ	^ŋ ^w	
	glottalized	^{ɱ̚}	^{ɲ̚}	^{ɲ̚}	^{ŋ̚}	^{ŋ̚} ^w	
Approximant	voiceless			^{j̥}		^{ɰ̥}	
	voiced			j		w	
	glottalized			^{j̚}		^{ɰ̚}	

There is also a flap, /r/, which only occurs in one morpheme, the clitic =/r a/ "probably". In addition, the consonants /p/, /p^h/, /l/ are found in Spanish loan words.

The labial velars /ɰ w ɰ k^w/ become bilabial [ɸ β β k^ɸ] before front vowels: [ɸæ̃] "it is finished" vs. [ɰā] "John", etc.

Phonetically aspirated fricatives do not occur before creaky vowels, while aspirated stops do. Therefore, Silverman et al. (1994) treats them as fricative-/h/ clusters.

Silverman (1994:126) remarks that voiced stops are prenasalized in intervocalic position, but later on the same page states that they are prenasalized in initial position. With voiced plosives, the nasalization is two-thirds the duration of the consonant. It is not clear if they ever appear without prenasalization.

Voiceless nasals are voiced for the last quarter of their duration.

Glottalized sonorants are variable in their production. They may occur as a glottal stop followed by a modally voiced sonorant, [ʔm], [ʔj], etc.; an initially creaky voiced sonorant switching to modal voice by the end; a fully creaky consonant; or the creak may extend into the following vowel.

Phonotactics

Aspirated consonants do not occur before breathy vowels, and glottalized consonants only occur before modally voiced vowels. Nasal consonants only occur before nasal vowels. Voiced plosives are prenasalized in intervocalic position.

Consonant clusters include NC, where N is a nasal and C is a voiceless plosive or affricate, and SC, where S is a sibilant and C is a tenuis plosive or affricate.

References

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 2. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Jalapa De Diaz Mazatec" (<http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/jala1237>). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
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